The Old Paths

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"A Second Chance"

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Often, men offer us "second chances." Little children play games, and sometimes call for a "do-over." When my boys played baseball, there were times when the coach offered to have a certain play "done over" due to it being a controversial play. When school teachers see children running in the hallways, they may tell them to "go back and walk" because they do not want children running in the halls. I think about second chances when I think of the beloved "delete" key that is attached to my computer. How many times I have needed a "do over" in writing, and found the "delete" key a welcome sight! In fact, computers have an option called "undo" (Click "edit" and it is there!) where we can go back and "undo" something we just did, actually going back to an earlier version of our document. In sports, as well as in computers, and other aspects of life, it seems we can have second chances.

Yet, are we really providing people with "second chances" when we speak of a "do over", an "undo" option, or a "delete" key? Think about this. In truth, we cannot re-live and readjust the mistakes made in life. We cannot go back in time and relive the past so as to not make the mistake. The best we can do in such cases is PRETEND like it did not happen and then reenact the event, changing our conduct, so that we give the impression that it did not happen! Whether we speak of sporting events, computer work, something we wrote with a pencil, etc., the best we can do is ***pretend*** like the mistake did not happen, for we all recognize that it happened! Time moves in only one direction, so man cannot truly go back and offer people a "second chance."

"Second Chances" Are In Christ!

Unlike the examples above, we see that in Christ, we truly have a second chance! This is because in Christ, we can have forgiveness of sins. In such forgiveness, it is not merely "pretending" that a sin has not occurred and retracing our steps so as to avoid the sin. In the case of forgiveness, Christ actually will erase the sin and make the filthy sinner clean again! This is what Peter taught when he told the Jews, *"Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be* ***blotted out*** *…"* (Acts 3:19). Isaiah said, *"though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become as wool"* (Isa. 1:18). Yes, Christ is the only One who can truly offer people a "second chance"!

Christ came into the world, and by the shedding of His blood, offers a way by which man can be saved and free from the guilt of sin (Matt. 26:26; Rev. 1:5). Does this action erase a man's history? By no means! Sins (acts contrary to God's will, I Jn. 3:4; Jas. 4:17) have been committed by man (Rom. 3:23). Yet, Christ is willing to forgive us and will erase the guilt of our sin when we accept His conditions for forgiveness in loving faith and obedience (Mk. 16:16).

Christ allows us a true "second chance" by which we can determine not to do those wicked things again. We then make sure this occurs by fighting against Satan (Jas. 4:7) and looking for the way to escape temptation (I Cor. 10:13).

There is a reason why Christ calls being born into His kingdom being *"born again"* (Jn. 3:3, 5; I Pet. 1:23). It is because in Christ we have an opportunity to truly start anew, afresh, and begin again. Having been baptized into Christ, our sins are washed away. Our guilt is no longer over us, and we become *"as white as snow"*! Truly, Christ offers a "second chance," but we need to take advantage of His offer while we still can (II Cor. 6:2)!

Conclusion

Living on this side of eternity, we cannot go back and "undo" history. However, Christ's blood gives us the opportunity to erase that guilt, to start anew, and to be a better person today than we have been in the past.

No man can offer what Christ offers us; because with man, we are only pretending! No one can truly go back in time. However, Christ offers us true forgiveness, true pardon, and *"newness of life"* (Rom. 6:3-4)!

How thankful I am for a "delete" key on the computer! I suppose only God Himself knows how many mistakes I have made in writing this short document! Yet, I am even more grateful for God sending His Son to die for me (Jn. 3:16). Through Him, I can have true forgiveness, a real "second chance" and a home in Heaven!

Encouragement To Parents

Editor's Note:

As a parent, I enjoy reading things that will help me be a better parent. I am not perfect, and need to learn from the experiences of others, whether through oral, written advice, or just watching their example (Matt. 5:16). I especially love learning from Bible examples of parents who "got it right" through their faithfulness to the Lord and their faithful teaching of God's word to their children. I look for such examples in Scripture, and try to model what I do after them. One such example of folks who I think "got it right" is Eunice and Lois in relation to the instruction they gave Timothy while he was growing up (II Tim. 1:5, 3:15).

Please read the paragraph below. I read this and gained from it, and thought it would be something that others could use as well. This paragraph is reprinted from an old Bible study book entitled, "Elam's Notes"; a class book written by brother H. Leo Boles in 1930. -JJ

"Timothy had known the word of God from a youth. Paul says that *"from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."* The greatest blessing that Timothy received was his training by his mother and grandmother; the greatest blessing that any one can receive is to be taught the Bible from childhood up. Parents can do no greater thing for their children than to teach them the word of God. The richest legacy that parents can leave their children is the inheritance of a good name and an unwavering faith in God; the wisest thing that children can do is to receive the training of father and mother in the *"chastening and admonition of the Lord."* A Christian home can have a greater influence on children than anything else. Parents should feel the obligation to teach the word of God diligently to their children, and the children should be taught early in life to receive the word of God into their hearts."

[H. Leo Boles, Elam's Notes, 1930, p. 327]

Truth Never Dies

Anonymous

Truth never dies. The ages come and go.
The mountains wear away, the stars retire.
Destruction lays earth's mighty cities low;
And empires, states and dynasties expire;
But caught and handed onward to the wise,
Truth never dies.

Though unreceived and scoffed at through the years;
Though made the butt of ridicule and jest;
Though held aloft for mockery and jeers,
Denied by those of transient power possessed,
Insulted by indolence and lies,
Truth never dies.

It answers not. It does not take offence,
But with a mighty silence bides it time;
As some great cliff that braves the elements
And lifts through all the storms its head sublime,
It ever stands, uplifted by the wise;
Truth never dies.

As rests the sphinx amid Egyptian sands;
As looms on high the snowy peak and crest;
As firm and patient as Gibraltar stands,
So truth, unwearied, waits the era blessed
When men shall turn to it with great surprise.

Truth never dies.

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I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!

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